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## California Postsecondary Education Commission

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# Update on the Commission's University Eligibility Study for the Class of 2007

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The Commission regularly conducts University Eligibility Studies to estimate the percentage of California high school graduates who meet the admission requirements of the California State University (CSU) and the University of California (UC). The Commission conducts these studies in cooperation with the CSU, UC, and the California Department of Education. The most recent eligibility study was for the high school graduating class of 2003. At its September 2006 meeting, the Commission adopted a resolution stating its intention to proceed with an eligibility study for the high school graduating class of 2007.

Commission staff is continuing with planning for the 2007 study. The Commission formed an advisory committee consisting of representatives of the UC, the CSU, the Department of Finance, the Department of Education, and the Legislative Analyst's Office. The advisory committee met on January 11, 2007, and reached the following decisions on key issues regarding the approach and schedule for the study.

**Approach to the study.** The study will be conducted in the same way as the 2003 study, but with a larger sample size and an improved design. A representative sample of schools will be selected, and transcript data for all graduates of the selected schools will be collected electronically. It is not practical to contact all schools in the State and collect paper transcripts by mail as was done with the 2001 and earlier studies.

**Margin of error.** The margin of error of the results is determined by the number of schools sampled. Based on the tradeoff between the cost of the study, completing the review of transcripts in a timely manner, and the value of having more precise results, the advisory committee decided that the study should try to achieve a margin of error of 2% or less. For this margin of error, a sample of 150–200 schools is needed.

**Schedule for study.** Completion of the study is largely determined by the availability of university admission staff to review the transcript data collected from schools. For a 150-school study, it is practical to expect that transcript review can be completed by May 2008, which would allow the study to be completed as early as December 2008.

**Statistical consultant.** The UC will have lead responsibility for selecting and engaging the statistical consultant for the 2007 study. In the 2003 study, this task was entrusted to the CSU.

**Technical committee.** Because of the level of technical expertise available in the advisory committee, there was no need to form a separate technical committee to develop specific plans for sampling schools, collecting data, and analyzing the results. The existing advisory committee will review and implement the consultant's recommendations.

Following the advisory committee meeting, the UC recommended Thomas Piazza, Ph.D., a statistician at the Survey Research Center, UC Berkeley as the statistical consultant. The other members of the

advisory committee concurred with this recommendation. Staff from the Commission, the UC, and the CSU met with Dr. Piazza on February 28, 2007. Some of the issues discussed at that meeting were:

**Schedule for sampling plan.** To meet the schedule for completing the study, selected schools must be contacted by the end of May 2007. This means that all work on the sample design and sample selection must be completed by mid-May 2007.

**Sample design.** The cost of the study depends on the number of schools in the study. Since costs are a concern, Dr. Piazza will develop plans for 150-school and 200-school studies and estimate the margins of error that would be achieved by each of these sample sizes. These plans will include strategies for improving the accuracy of the results, such as making adjustments to reflect demographic differences between the schools participating in the study and California public high schools as a whole.

**Regional estimates of eligibility.** The UC has an interest in the geographic variation in eligibility. Dr. Piazza will assess the feasibility of developing regional eligibility rates or of making separate estimates of eligibility for schools in rural areas.

Dr. Piazza will proceed with developing a sampling plan and brief the advisory committee at a meeting to be held on March 26, 2007.

### Advisory committee members

Organization	Representative
University of California Office of the President	Charles Masten, Ph.D., Assistant Director Undergraduate Admissions
California State University Chancellor's Office	Philip Garcia, Ph.D., Senior Director Division of Analytic Studies
California Department of Education Curriculum and Instruction Branch	Joe Radding, Education Programs Consultant Intersegmental Relations Office
California Department of Finance	Sara Swan, Principal Budget Analyst Higher Education Unit  Mollie Quasebarth, Budget Analyst Higher Education Unit
Legislative Analyst's Office	Anthony Simbol, Principal Fiscal and Policy Analyst Higher Education